

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
IO-13 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 NEA-10 ACDA-12 AF-10
/117 W

-----072020 110118Z /63

R 101124Z APR 78
FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1973
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON
COMUSFORAZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L PONTA DELGADA 0238

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PO
SUBJECT: FLA LEADER RETURNS TO AZORES

REF: PONTA DELGADA 0233(DTG 061331Z APR 78)

SUMMARY: FLA LEADER JOSE DE ALMEIDA RETURNED TO THE AZORES APRIL 7 FROM A TRIP TO EUROPE AND POSSIBLY AFRICA. IN SPITE OF THE OUTSTANDING ARREST WARRANT (REFTEL), NO ATTEMPT WAS MADE TO DETAIN ALMEIDA. END SUMMARY.

1. AZOREAN LIBERATION FRONT (FLA) LEADER JOSE DE ALMEIDA RETURNED TO THE AZORES APRIL 7 FOLLOWING A SWING THROUGH EUROPE AND POSSIBLY AFRICA TO RAISE SUPPORT FOR THE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT. ADDRESSING A LARGE GATHERING OF FAITHFUL AT PONTA DELGADA AIRPORT, ALMEIDA CLAIMED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED "SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING" IN VARIOUS EUROPEAN NATIONS, BUT DID NOT ELABORATE. ALMEIDA NEITHER CONFIRMED NOR DENIED SPECULATION THAT HE HAD VISITED AFRICA AS WELL.

2. WITH THE EXISTENCE OF AN OUTSTANDING ARREST WARRANT FOR JOSE DE ALMEIDA (REFTEL) THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE CONCERN THAT THE

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ARREST WOULD BE ATTEMPTED IMMEDIATELY UPON HIS RETURN TO THE AZORES. UPON DEPLANING AT SANTA MARIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, ALMEIDA WAS REPORTEDLY SURROUNDED BY A DOZEN OR SO SANTA MARIAN SUPPORTERS WHO "PLEDGED TO DIE FOR THEIR LEADER IF NEED BE". AS NO CONNECTING FLIGHT WAS IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE BETWEEN SANTA MARIA AND SAO MIGUEL ISLAND, FORTY FIVE SUPPORTERS CHARTERED A SATA AIRCRAFT AND FLEW TO SANTA MARIA TO PICK UP ALMEIDA. AT PONTA

DELGADA AIRPORT HE WAS GREETED BY FIVE HUNDRED TO ONE THOUSAND
VEHEMENT SUPPORTERS. NO ATTEMPT OF ANY SORT WAS MADE TO ARREST
ALMEIDA.

3.

3. COMMENT: LOCAL AUTHORITIES' DESIRES THAT ALMEIDA NOT BE
ARRESTED NOR TAMPERED WITH ARE QUITE UNDERSTANDABLE. IT IS FELT
HERE THAT DESPITE AN APPARENT DESIRE BY UNKNOWN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
FIGURES THAT ALMEIDA BE PUT BEHIND BARS, LOCAL OFFICIALS WILL
MANAGE TO AVOID, FOR SOME TIME, SUCH ACTION FOR FEAR OF THE
CONSEQUENCES. HOWEVER, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT ALMEIDA,
DESIRING CENTRAL GOVERNMENT "PROVOCATION", WILL CONTINUE TO UP THE
ANTE UNTIL CENTRAL GOVERNMENT PRESSURE FOR LOCAL ACTION AGAINST THE
FLA BECOMES UNBEARABLE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPATRIATION, PARTY LEADERS, AZORES, LIBERATION FRONTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PONTA00238
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780154-1025
Format: TEL
From: PONTA DELGADA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780474/aaaacldcm.tel
Line Count: 78
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 266920b3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 PONTA DELGADA 233
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3020586
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FLA LEADER RETURNS TO AZORES
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PO, FLA, (DE ALMEIDA, JOSE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/266920b3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014